

Scripture: Psalms 8:1-9

Sermon Title: I believe in God; creator of heaven and earth.

1.

May the grace and peace of our good Lord be with us all at One Heart Church. I sense the change in seasons a lot these days. I noticed on my way to the church that the maple trees have already turned red. The fields around the road are also turning golden. The cool night air in the morning and evening makes you feel that autumn has arrived. What do you think of as you experience these changes in seasons and nature? Watching the sun and the moon rise and set, and the seasons change, don't you feel that someone is leading the world with precision? This summer our family took a road trip as we moved to Rochester. Along the way we experienced how beautiful nature is, and it was an opportunity to meet God deeply in a variety of natural environments. When I go to a national park like Yellowstone or Yosemite, I am in awe at how beautiful it is. It is really difficult not to feel the presence of God in such great nature. Because God reveals Himself through nature.

Some have even said that nature is a book where you can see God's revelation along with the Bible. (Jonghak Woo, *The Challenge of the Age of Science and the Response of Christianity*, p. 29) In general, the Bible is a book that reveals how salvation is accomplished through Jesus Christ. However, besides the Bible, there is another book in which God revealed Himself, and that is the book Nature. Nature is not written in writing, but appears in the creation world, including the universe, the earth, and the world of living things that exist on the earth. (Jonghak Woo, *The Challenge of the Age of Science and the Response of Christianity*, p. 30) To understand natural phenomena, we create a systematic framework and make laws to understand nature. The effort to explain is what we call science. There are many scientists among us. I believe you are basically the ones who explain and apply the common grace of God to us. If a pastor is a person who testifies of God by interpreting the Bible, which is a special revelation, then you, as scientists, are great people who reveal the existence of God by interpreting natural phenomena that are common grace.

The Bible says that everyone, even non-scientists, can know that God lives and is great in this great nature. This is Romans 1:19-20. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."

According to these words, God is clearly revealed in nature. It is rather strange that God's power and divinity cannot be found in nature.

2.

What do you think? Do you feel God the Creator when you look at nature and the living things in it? Christian faith begins with belief in the Holy Trinity. Today, we confessed our faith in the Apostles' Creed. The basic frame of the Apostles' Creed is faith in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We believe in God the Father as our Creator God, and we believe in God's Son, Jesus Christ as our Savior. And we believe that the Holy Spirit reveals the salvation of the Son Jesus and the reign of God the Creator.

How does the first verse of the Apostles' Creed begin? "I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth." Our faith begins with belief in God the Creator.

We believe that Almighty God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Without this, we cannot begin our faith. God created everything in this world. He created all things for good. He still rules and sustains it, and He does not stop the act of creation. This is where our faith begins. God's creation includes not only this earth, but that heaven and the whole universe. The planet Earth is huge, but how big is that universe? And how big is the God who rules the universe?

Suppose we have a spacecraft traveling at the speed of light. It takes 10 minutes to reach the sun in a spaceship traveling at the speed of light. It takes half a day to leave the solar system at the speed of light. However, it is said that it would take a thousand years to get out of the solar system in an airplane. You can guess that the solar system alone is huge, right? The time it takes to travel from the Sun to the nearest star in a spacecraft at the speed of light is 4 years. To our eyes, the night sky is full of stars. But the interstellar space between the stars is a distance that would take decades even at the speed of light. These stars come together to form galaxies. The nearest galaxy to our galaxy, the Andromeda Galaxy, is 2.6 million light-years from Earth and is made up of 400 billion stars. But it's not just one or two galaxies that are a collection of these gigantic stars. Simply put, the universe is big. It's insanely big. But how big is the God who creates and rules this vast universe? To believe in a Creator is to acknowledge the magnification and greatness of God. Only when we know the greatness of creation that includes the whole universe can we know how great the humility of Christ is. It is such a remarkable humility and mystery that Jesus Christ, who is bigger than the universe and is God, entered the body of Mary in the size of an invisible sperm and became a human being.

3.

David, the author of Psalm 8, today's scripture, looked at nature and was amazed. "I cannot help but marvel at the heavens that the Lord's fingers have made, and the moon and stars above them," he says. David believes that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. And he is amazed at the fact that God has made man rule over this earth and all the beasts and living things on it. He feels God while looking at the Bible as well as nature. Psalm 104 describes God, who is vaster than the universe, as the meticulous One who takes care of even the problems of eating and sleeping of the little creatures on Earth. It is the amazing mystery of the Creator that such a vast One cares for each creature with so much detail.

To believe in God as the Creator is to acknowledge that all beings created by God are good and precious. This is very important. Beings created by God include not only humans, but also all kinds of living things. In verse 4 of the text, he confesses, "what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?" In verse 5, "Yet thou hast made him little less than God, and dost crown him with glory and honor." Those who believe in God the Creator realize that all human beings are worthy. Because all human beings are made in the image of God. This is Genesis 1:26-27. "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created man in his

own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Human beings are very precious because they are image bearers of God.

Believing in God as Creator means acknowledging the worth of not only your own existence, but the existence of others. It could be a work colleague I really hate, or a church brother or sister. It could be my PI. There is a will that God wants to accomplish through that person as well. When we believe in God as our Creator, we believe that God lives in all our neighbors around us. This is the reason why no one in the world should be treated badly.

4.

Furthermore, to believe in God as the Creator means to believe that all things in this nature were created with God's special purpose and will. Not just humans, but even the microorganisms in this world should be treated with care. If we confess that all things in the world are made good by God the Creator, we cannot treat anything in the world without care.

If we do not cherish the living beings on this planet and live with care and restraint, the earth will be in a grave crisis. The planet is already in the midst of a serious climate crisis. All parts of the world are suffering from intense heat and severe cold. This summer, Seoul, the capital of Korea, was hit by a water bomb due to heavy rain, and Gangnam became a sea of water. The American West suffers from wildfires every year. California, Oregon and Washington are suffering from fires created by nature, not man. All of these are problems caused by the climate crisis. Above all, the COVID-19 pandemic that put the world in a panic two and a half years ago is the result of human abuse of ecosystems. It is the result of human beings using nature without restraint to satisfy their greed and desires. As humans do not take care of the ecosystem and do not value life, nature is now counter attacking humans with calamity (disaster) and disease. We need to hear the cry of Mother Nature, who groans while looking at a phenomenon like COVID-19. We must learn to live in harmony with creation. And you have to live a slower life. When you give up the fast rhythm of life and choose an uncomfortable life, you can live in harmony with the created world.

5.

This drawing is to commemorate Creation Day this year. The bush is on fire. And on it is written “Listen to the voice of creation”. Please listen to the creatures. In the Bible, the bush often symbolizes the marginalized and the suffering. A bush that has to survive in a wilderness where there is no water is no good. It's an abandoned tree with little woody parts. A bush is a useless tree that animals cannot eat or use as shade because it has little water. But when Moses came to Horeb while tending sheep in the wilderness of Midian, he saw a bush burning with fire. Miraculously, the bush did not burn out, but continued to glow and shine. And God speaks to Moses. This is Exodus 3:7-9. “I have clearly seen the suffering of my people in Egypt, and I have heard the cry of anguish because of oppression. Therefore I know clearly their suffering.

The bush symbolizes the abandoned Israelites, and the fire burning on it symbolizes the Holy Spirit suffering with them. God hears the cry of those who cry on this earth. And the fire of the Holy Spirit burns upon them, setting them free to shine. God hears not only the cry of man, but also the groaning of creation. God hears the

groaning of animals and plants and Mother Nature in every corner of the globe. Albert Schweitzer, known as a saint of Africa, once said: "The God we believe in hears the groans from the earth as a prayer, "Thy kingdom come." He is a God who hears and responds to the groans of humans and Mother Nature.

The fires created by the man-made climate crisis have become catastrophic, burning forests and homes. But the fire God made on the bush made it shine without burning it. Although the burning bush is the people of Israel who seem to have been abandoned and enslaved, the unquenchable bush we must remember on the Day of Creation is also the earnest hope of the Holy Spirit, who maintains and protects the created world. The Holy Spirit will not turn away from the cry of creation just as he does not turn away from the groanings of those who cry on this earth. Especially in the feast of creation, when we believe and obey God as the Lord of creation, we must listen to the cry of creation. And you have to follow God's will to set them free.

The church has a duty to protect and preserve the lives of this earth by obeying the will of God the Creator. That is also the will of God who entrusted us with this land and commanded us to rule it in Genesis 1. The church should take the lead and join a low-carbon movement and conserve resources. I was in culture shock when I visited churches in the western United States. Disposable Styrofoam bowls were used to distribute food to the members in the cafeteria of each church. If all the styrofoam were buried in the ground, they wouldn't rot, so I was worried. In the United States, food waste is also disposed of as general waste. Recycling is roughly thrown away. A church that has God the Creator as its master should not do that. We must value life and strive to make this earth a beautiful star of the Lord. We need to preserve and nurture this earth so that people can meet God in nature. Last week, when I came to church, I told them to bring a tumbler and use it, so I heard that female church members discussed transitioning to using tumblers and mugs. I hope we can all join in.

When we remember that the people around us are God's creations and that God's image is in them, we can't help but value the people next to us. This is because God is the God who answers our groanings and unfolds God's will through us. Furthermore, we must not forget the will of God the Creator, who wants His glory to be revealed through all creation. Therefore, we must cherish even a single leaf of grass around us. We should live with gratitude. As St. Francis of Assisi sang, I wish the sun to be our brother and the moon to be our sister. I hope to dream of a beautiful world in which the mother earth sings the Creator in harmony with all life forms. When we take care of all living things around us, God's creation will shine even more on this earth. This must be our proper attitude of faith to commemorate the Day of Creation and serve God the Creator.